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Practice Nursing on the Leading Edge

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Public Health Service
National Institutes of Health

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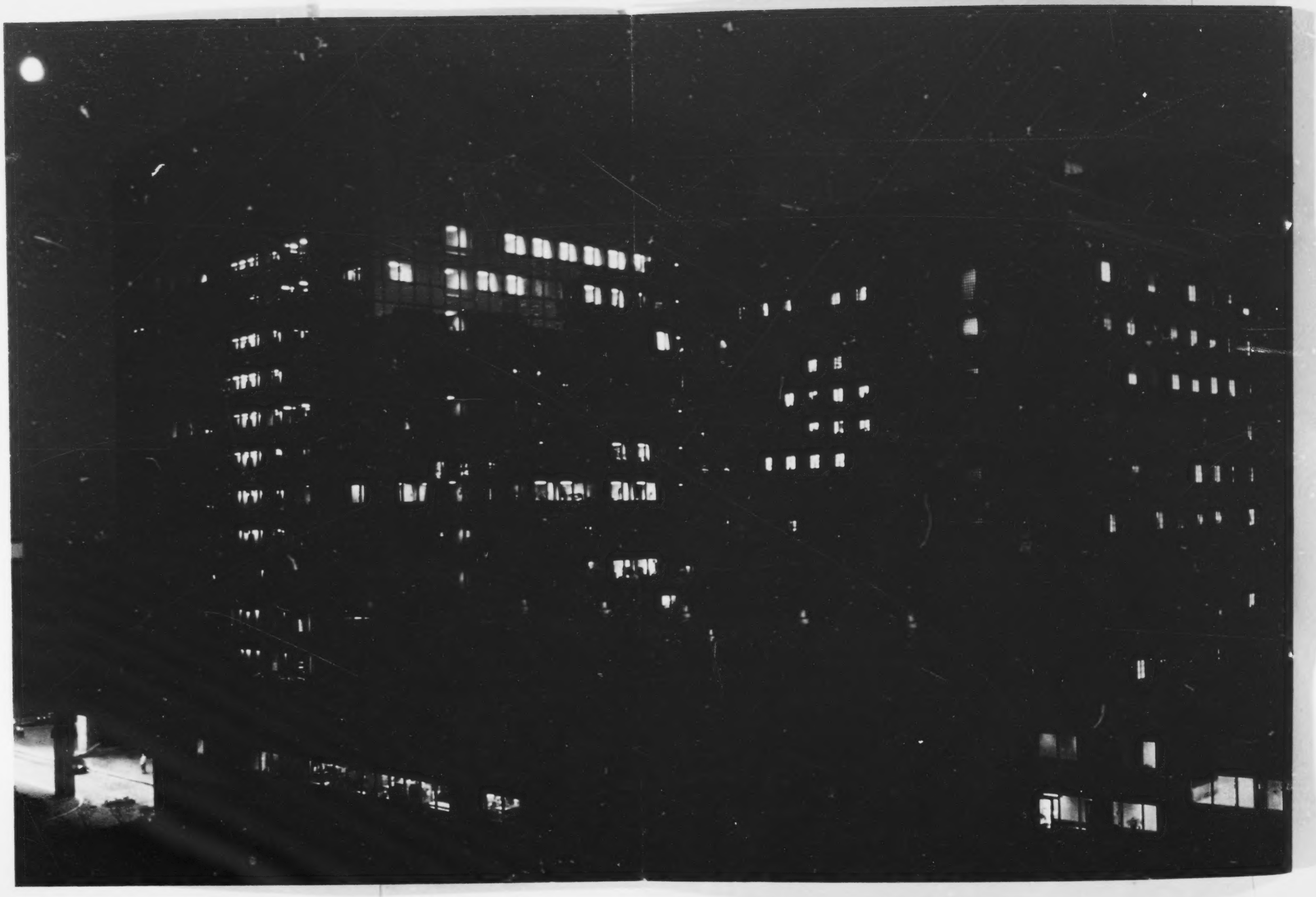

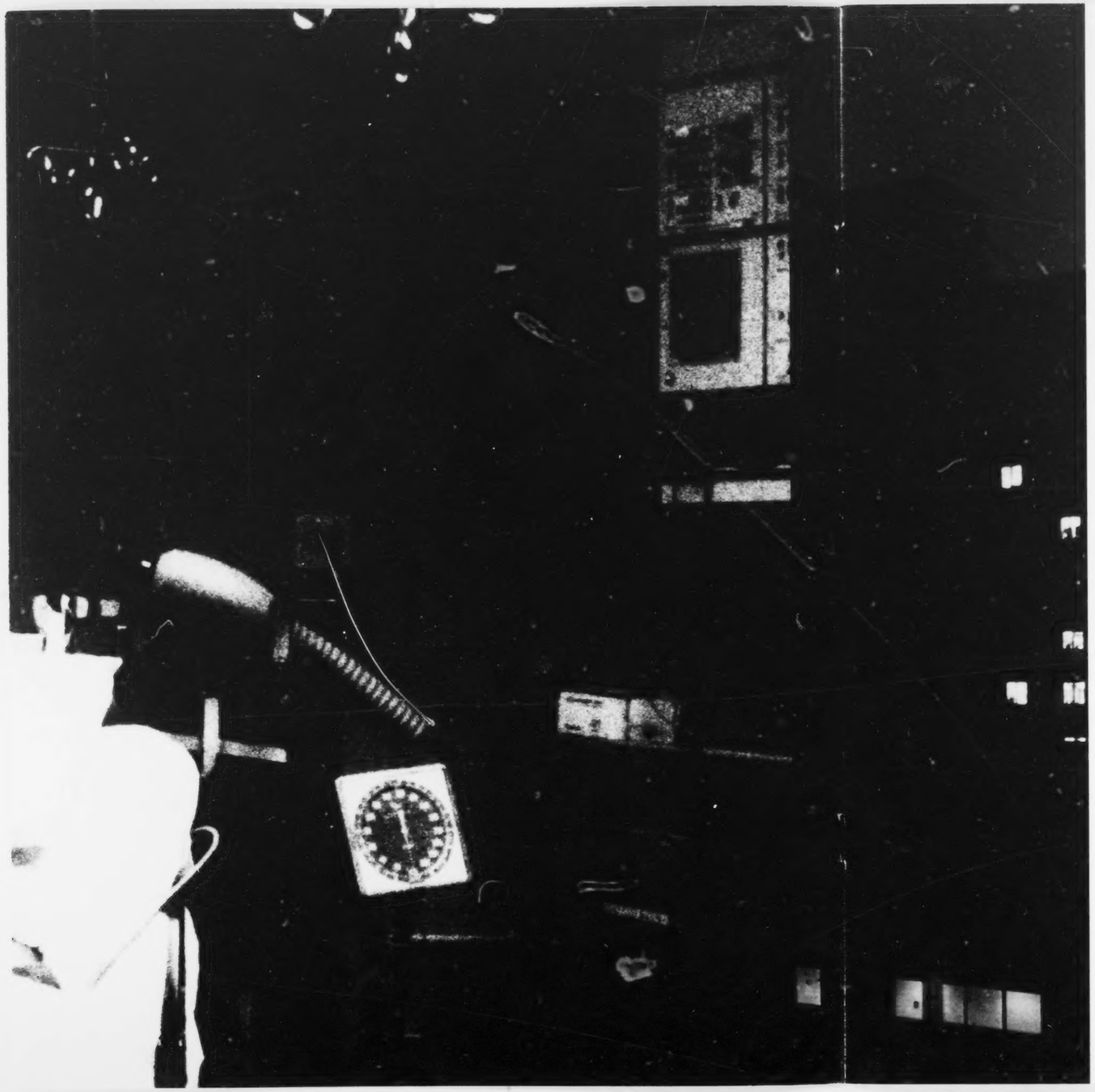

at the Only Hospital of its Kind

The Clinical Center of the National Institutes of Health is one of the few hospitals you'll find where you can practice primary nursing the way you first envisioned it.

The Warren Grant Magnuson Clinical Center is the 540-bed hospital near Washington, D.C. established by Congress and devoted solely to biomedical research. Ours is the only hospital of its kind. Our mission is the future of human health, and we know just how much that future depends on the progress of the nursing profession today. Here, the nurse's role is unique—a driving force in our system; a governing factor in the quality of the work we do.

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NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

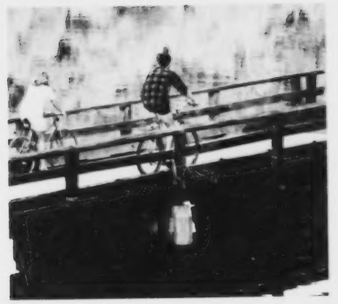
National Institutes Of Health Clinical Center

a World Center for Clinical Research in the Nation's Capital

The Clinical Center is on the wooded, 360-acre campus of NIH in Bethesda, Maryland, near downtown Washington. As a world center for biomedical research, this 14-story research hospital and laboratory complex was designed to bring patients closer to researchers. The Clinical Center houses the most advanced diagnostic equipment and treatment facilities available. Nurses and other clinicians communicate on a regular basis with laboratory scientists. Our Medical Information System (MIS) rapidly and confidentially transmits patient information to all relevant departments and researchers. As the major clinical research facility for the federal government, the NIH Clinical Center responds to health issues as they emerge, sometimes before they gain national significance. Most of our work involves testing new drugs and treatments, and NIH nurses have been on the forefront in developing models and guidelines for treatments that don't come into general practice for months or years.

The Ambulatory Care Research Facility (ACRF), located within the Clinical Center, reflects an increasing emphasis on studies that involve ambulatory patients. The ACRF houses departments such as nuclear medicine and diagnostic radiology, as well as specialized outpatient clinics on eleven floors. The nursing role in ambulatory care serves as a model for use in other facilities across the country.

The Clinical Center has its own medical library in the building. Also, The National Library of Medicine, which serves the entire nation with valuable medical and scientific resources, is right on campus.



In addition to such vast professional resources, the NIH community, more than 14,000 strong, offers an inviting array of possibilities for your personal growth and enjoyment. There's an ever expanding variety of clubs (such as the ski club, sailing club and photography club) for people who want to take advantage of what Washington and the surrounding area have to offer. The nation's capital is an exciting place to live. Here you can observe or participate in just about any sport, cultural or recreational activity. Getting around is easy. The White House, the Capitol, the business and shopping districts of downtown Washington, and the historical waterfront community of Georgetown are all within a short drive of NIH. There is a convenient Metro bus and subway stop right on campus, with service to downtown points throughout the metropolitan area.

You'll enjoy theater, music and nightlife. The famous Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and Wolf Trap Farm Park feature internationally known orchestras, opera and dance companies, pop groups and performers. Washington's museums and universities offer lecture series and seminars to the public on all kinds of subjects. The city's many parks are wonderful places for picnics, cycling or jogging along the Potomac River. And Bethesda itself, long known for its pleasant residential neighborhoods, is fast becoming a hot spot for fashionable shopping and popular restaurants.

There are tempting out of town places to spend free time, too. The Chesapeake Bay is only about an hour east of D.C., and the Atlantic beaches are about 2½ hours away. The foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains are an hour to the west and the Shenandoah National Park is 2 hours southwest. New York City is 2½ hours away by train.

You'll find that working in one of the world's largest research centers in the nation's capital offers you exciting experiences you wouldn't find anywhere else. What happens here makes headlines everywhere. You'll be part of an institution and a community that commands attention around the world.

Where the Focus is on the Future of Human Health

At NIH, the daily possibility of a biomedical breakthrough makes your work as exciting as it is vital. The era of discovery that produced antibiotics, heart-lung machines and recombinant DNA technology has generated as many new questions as it has answered. Scientists are finding that the origins of diseases like diabetes, hypertension and cancer are not only elusive, but complex. Solving these puzzles, and taking on the challenge of AIDS and other HIV-related infections, today's biggest health threats, occupy the collective attention of researchers working on a diversity of scientific fronts.

The Clinical Center is one of the few medical facilities anywhere devoted exclusively to answering these questions. By applying methods of scientific discovery, clinical investigators here have helped to elucidate the basis of genetic diseases, clarify immunological processes and how they relate to health, and increase understanding of pharmacology and pharmacokinetics, thus making way for new methods of drug therapy.

Although research begins in the laboratory, a new theory or treatment ultimately must be tested in a clinical setting. Here is where the NIH nurse becomes the key figure, collaborating with other health professionals to make science consistent with the highest quality of care.

Apart from your collaborative role in the research initiated by scientists at the Clinical Center, you'll be encouraged to employ research methods to conduct studies in your own areas of interest. Protocols proposed by nurses are subject to the same review for scientific merit and adherence to legal and ethical guidelines as that of all clinical research at NIH. Nursing research is aimed at expanding knowledge of responses to disease and treatment and improving nursing practice. Nurses have undertaken such projects as evaluation of serial blood sampling techniques, psychosocial concerns identified by patients with AIDS, the effect of endotracheal suctioning on arterial blood gases and cardiac rhythm, and new graduate nurses' attitudes toward cancer.

Our research focus gives nurses extraordinary autonomy. Here, you have unique opportunities to extend your education, to grow professionally, and to participate in work that will affect human health far into the future.

and the Nurse is in the Forefront of the Profession

The Clinical Center supports the kind of nursing you've always wanted to do. Our nurse-patient ratios are unusually low. And our commitment to the nursing profession is not bound by conventional attitudes or traditional structures.

You'll provide specialized care to patients who come from all over the world to participate in research. The Nursing Department fosters the concept of nursing as a clinical practice discipline in its own right. All nursing units practice primary nursing, in which one professional nurse has responsibility for managing all aspects of nursing care for a given patient from admission to discharge to outpatient follow-up. You'll participate in the development and application of new technology and the design of innovative nursing practice systems.

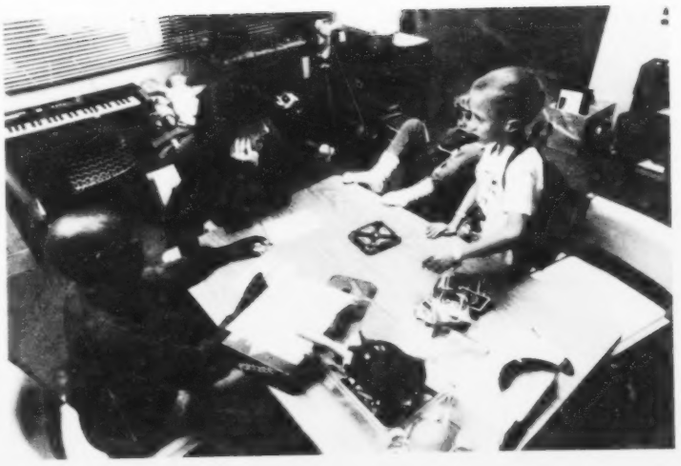
The research environment adds to your challenge. An important part of your work is patient education. You'll help patients and families deal with the effects of illness and treatment; you'll provide them with information during the course of their research protocols and help them understand the concepts that influence their treatment.

All of your patients are referred by their local physicians to participate in a specific research study. Patient care is free of charge. Therefore, you will not have to be concerned about billing or reimbursement issues. Some patients at NIH have illnesses that a nurse working in a community hospital would be unlikely to encounter. Other patients have the diseases we are all familiar with: AIDS, diabetes, heart disease, cancer and stroke. Experimental treatment is administered in a carefully controlled and monitored manner. Success of each study depends upon the nurse's observation of side effects and documentation of patient responses. Depending on the research study, patients may remain for long periods, or return at intervals over several years while scientists record the changes that occur over the course of continued illness, and the long-term effect of treatment.

The care of your patients includes collaboration with physician-scientists, social workers, nutritionists and therapists from several disciplines. You'll participate in multidisciplinary decision making and planning for your patients over the course of their treatment. And for those who remain for long periods of time, you can call upon such Clinical Center resources as the patient activities department, children's programs and tutoring, religious services, the patient library, barber shop, bank, gift shop and travel office.

At the Clinical Center, the quality of nursing care is our foremost consideration. It's never compromised by financial factors. In such an atmosphere, you can expect and get the kind of professional support you need to realize your most hopeful vision of nursing.

Consider the Possibilities



The Clinical Center Nursing Department offers a wide variety of ways to sharpen your skills, pursue formal education and advance in career level and salary.

Your tenure here begins with a 4-week departmental orientation, followed by an individualized preceptorship in your selected area of practice. You'll learn the latest techniques and apply them within the security of a unit-based preceptorship. Special extended training programs are available to prepare you as a specialist in oncology, critical care or neuroscience.

You can continue your education with general or specialty courses offered by the Nursing Department and approved for CEUs by the American Nurses Association. There are also a wide variety of clinical inservices, case conferences, and grand rounds sponsored on a regular basis and presented by the NIH nursing staff. You will receive generous support to do coursework related to your work at the undergraduate or graduate level at one of the several universities in the area.

As you advance in clinical skill and specialty expertise, you can also advance through the four levels of our clinical ladder. This innovative system is designed to support primary nursing and recognize increasing proficiency in direct clinical care.

Nursing conferences and symposia on subjects of current interest draw national audiences to the Clinical Center. These meetings give you a forum in which to learn and share expertise with nurses from all over the country.

At NIH, participation by all levels of nursing staff in decisions affecting practice and the working environment is an integral part of our nursing philosophy. You will have opportunities for committee work, formal and informal meetings with nursing administration, and your input will be asked for and acted upon. We also give you the opportunity to be active in external professional and community activities and back you up with assistance in preparing presentations and attending conferences.

Clinical Specialties

The research activities conducted at the Clinical Center cover essentially every major clinical specialty. The Nursing Department is divided into major Clinical Services, each directed by a Service Chief, organized along specialty lines. These Services offer nurses varied opportunities to practice clinical nursing, in addition to the chance to specialize and gain experience with rare and unusual patient populations or health problems.

Oncology

Nurses interested in specialization in oncology can practice in settings ranging from intensive care to ambulatory care, and can participate in research that has provided some of the most important and exciting recent advances in cancer care and treatment. Many patients are participating in Phase I trials in which a new treatment modality is being given to patients for the first time. Combinations of chemotherapy and other modes of therapy, as well as breakthrough work with biological response modifiers, are important areas of focus. Oncology nurses work along with investigators to evaluate responses to new treatments. They discover nursing implications and daily treatment and care requirements that won't become standard nursing practice for several years. Oncology nursing specialties include adult medical oncology, pediatric oncology, surgical oncology, radiation oncology, and the care of adults and children with HIV infection. A comprehensive orientation and preceptorship program is available to all new staff; new graduates are invited to consider either the New Graduate Preceptorship Program or the Cancer Training Program.

Critical Care

Critical care nurses at NIH have the opportunity to maximize sophisticated and complicated technological skills in a setting where staffing patterns and resources facilitate the delivery of holistic and individualized care using primary nursing. There are four major critical care units. The surgical intensive care unit provides care to surgical patients as well as cancer patients on biological response modifier therapy which must be administered in an intensive care setting. The medical intensive care unit provides care to adult and pediatric patients with multisystem failure requiring intensive care. The cardiac surgery intensive care unit provides intensive postoperative care to patients having open-heart surgery. The cardiac stepdown unit provides preoperative and postoperative care with monitoring of cardiac surgery patients. The critical care areas have the resources and staffing to support the professional development of nurses moving into critical care from other specialties, including a formal critical care course as well as numerous educational programs and an individualized preceptorship program.

AIDS and HIV Infection

AIDS and HIV-related infections constitute one of the greatest health threats to face our society this century. Several groundbreaking studies at NIH have lead to breakthroughs in the understanding of the etiology, pathophysiology and treatment of these disorders. Nurses at NIH were among the first to care for AIDS patients and to develop nursing care and approaches to the multifaceted problems associated with HIV infection. Essentially every Institute at NIH is involved with the study of some aspect of the pathophysiology, treatment or impact of AIDS and HIV infection, although the most intensive work is being supported by the National Cancer Institute and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. Several Phase I trials of antiviral drugs are under way, as are studies of treatments of opportunistic infections associated with AIDS and studies of potential vaccines. These studies take place in intensive care settings, acute care units and ambulatory care. Nurses may choose to work with AIDS on units primarily devoted to the study of HIV infection, or on units where the study of AIDS is combined with the study and treatment of other diseases. A multidisciplinary, cross-service approach is taken to the care of patients with HIV infection and to the support and education of nurses choosing to specialize in this challenging area.

Medical Surgical Specialties

The medical surgical research units offer opportunities for clinical specialization for experienced nurses as well as opportunities to refine and develop general skills for new graduates or nurses returning to clinical practice. These units provide an ideal setting for primary nursing, where nurses prepare patients to cope with long-term illness as well as respond to acute crises. Many of the diseases studied are immunologic, genetic or metabolic in origin. Many have no known cure, and patients of all ages are seen over time during periods of exacerbation and remission. As patients return

for re-evaluation or management of an acute episode in their disease, nurses draw on their long-term experience both with the individual patient and with the disease process to provide clinical care, teaching, counseling and support. Clinical specialization is available in cardiovascular and pulmonary disease, adult and pediatric endocrinology, ophthalmology, rheumatology, immunology, neuroscience, gerontology, digestive diseases and the study of the mechanisms and treatment of pain.

Mental Health

Nurses interested in psychiatry and mental health have the opportunity to work on a number of units specializing in studies of cognitive, psychiatric, neurological, metabolic and familial disorders. These programs explore the frontiers of biological psychiatry, including neuroendocrine function, biological rhythms, the pathophysiology and treatment of Alzheimer's Disease, schizophrenia, alcoholism, and affective disorder illness. Although the research focus is on biological mechanisms in psychiatric disorders, nursing care is provided in the context of a therapeutic environment, and nurses call upon a full range of therapeutic interventions, counseling and supportive skills in caring for patients participating in research. The comprehensive orientation and education program is designed to meet the needs of nurses from a variety of backgrounds and experiences, including new graduates.

Leadership Opportunities

The Nursing Department is committed to the support of clinical practice through outstanding unit level management, the availability of expert clinicians, and the availability of clinically oriented nurse educators in all areas. Head Nurses are accountable for the 24-hour management of a clinical research unit, including clinical practice, implementation of research protocols, staffing and scheduling, selection, hiring, supervision and evaluation of all nursing staff, and a unit budget. Clinical Nurse Specialists are responsible as a colleague of the Head Nurse for support of the quality of clinical care in a given specialty. They serve as expert consultants to primary nurses, develop and monitor standards of practice, provide specialty expertise in the development and implementation of staff education programs, and identify the need for and develop nursing research studies to improve clinical practice. Clinical Nurse Educators are responsible either to the Service Chief or Director of Education for the development of educational curricula, materials, and offerings with a generalized or specialty focus. Programs include orientation, preceptorship and patient education, as well as specialty courses, training programs and professional conferences that may be open to the external nursing community. Masters level preparation is strongly preferred for all leadership positions.

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